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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; US POLICY ON CUBA; VENEZUELA; IMF AND
ARGENTINA; PAKISTAN 11/05/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend international stories include the Bush administration's policy on Cuba; Venezuelan President Chavez's concentration of power; IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn's remarks about Argentina; and implications of Pakistani leader Musharraf's emergency rule.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Bush and Cuba"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" (11/03) carries an op-ed story by Carlos Fuentes, writer, who opines "Americans call an outgoing president that cannot be reelected a 'lame duck.' At this point in his failed presidency, one could say that George W. Bush does not even have 'wings.' What he does have is blind arrogance, self-ignoring ignorance and the mistaken idea that he owns universal kindness.

"When Bush came to power, he said: 'The US is the only surviving example of human progress.' Hence, the unilateralist arrogance with which the fatal Bush administration took over...

"What's happening is that the 'international community' is burying Bush's unilateralist dream... However, some matters allow Bush to believe that he can behave as though the world had not changed. One of them is Cuba...

"... Two threats hang over the Cuban transition- the less important threat is posed by a regime that is louder than enduring, that of Hugo Chavez, who is claiming that Cuba and Venezuela are the very same nation.

"Evidently, the larger threat is posed by Bush's imperial defiance on the eve of departure. Incredibly mistaken, Bush is using all the tools to frustrate (or at least delay) Cuba's transition - he is encouraging Miami exiles to replace the current regime on the island, inciting Cuban armed forces to betray the regime, reiterating the policy of sanctions on Cuba..., refusing to grant the Cuban regime what he provides to other communist regimes, like China and Vietnam (investment, dialogue, diplomacy, respect). Bush lashes out at Cuba for being a concentration camp, thereby forgetting that the worst prison on the island is the US base in Guantanamo. He does nothing but offer Cuba a veiled threat - that it could again be a US colony.

"... To Bush's arrogance, Latin America should respond with weapons of reason, caution, diplomacy, negotiation and respect for the Cuban people."

- "Democracy"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (11/05) "We should open our eyes wide. If we closely observe the Chavist reform, (we see that) it will increase the social balance, which is badly needed in a country with a lot of problems. But an imbalance is triggered by this concentration of power that scares even those within partisan ranks."

"Why so much concentration of power? Leaders and their programs should be measured by their ability to change, that is to evolve."

"Whether Chavez acknowledges it or not, the total sum of power he demands clearly implies a severe limitation on that ability to change. Or, as some world leftist leaders have put it (some of them admired by Chavez himself), there cannot be true socialism without true democracy."

- "Now that Strauss-Kahn takes over, he says he wants to see Cristina's plans"

Ana Baron, leading "Clarín's" Washington-based correspondent, writes (11/03) "During election campaigns, candidates can promise many things. However, the moment of truth has arrived, and the brand new IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn went right to the point. In response to a question from 'Clarín,' Strauss-Kahn explained that 'in order to negotiate its Paris Club debt,' Argentina will need 'IMF approval.' And he added: 'What I expect now is to see what the new Argentine government will say on economics, and what kind of economic policy the new president will implement.'"

"In other words, Strauss-Kahn wants to know Cristina Kirchner's economic program before deciding whether the IMF can 'approve' Argentina's renegotiation of its six-billion-dollar Paris Club debt."

"This means that the new IMF head expects some change in (Argentina's) economic policy; not only this."

"When 'Clarín' asked him whether Argentina will need an IMF arrangement to start negotiating its Paris Club debt, or whether there will be some flexibility on this, Strauss-Kahn confessed he will not decide that."

"... (Strauss-Kahn) warned that 'without (an) IMF (arrangement), there will not be any negotiation of the country's Paris Club debt, and without the latter investors will not be able to access adequate lines of credit, and without investment, the country's economic growth will stall.'"

- "An obstacle"

Paula Lugones, leading "Clarín's" international columnist, writes (11/05) "With his self-coup d'état, Musharraf has turned into something much worse than an uncomfortable ally for Washington."

"In addition to a serious diplomatic retreat..., the White House has already felt the impact. Joseph Biden, head of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee and Democratic presidential pre-candidate, said yesterday that the Bush administration does not have a concrete policy on Pakistan and that it is paying the price of flattering Musharraf at the expense of democracy in the country."

"Conditions worsened for the US yesterday - how can it continue betting on a coup maker who imprisons opponents and defenders of human rights? Of course, it is not the first time, but for someone who brags about being a world anti-terrorist leader and a 'defender of freedom,' it is a serious obstacle."

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